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THE SYRACUSE CAMPUS SCHOOL PLAN.

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THE CAMPUS SCHOOL PLAN FOR AN EDUCATIONAL PARK IN SYRACUSE, NEW YORK, WAS CONCEIVED WHEN THE BOARD OF EDUCATION WAS FACED WITH THE NEED TO REPLACE EIGHT OUTMODED ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS. THE PARK WOULD BE BUILT ON A SITE ON THE PERIPHERY OF THE CITY, TO WHICH STUDENTS WOULD BE TRANSPORTED BY BUS. THE FIRST CAMPUS WOULD ESTABLISH FOUR PAIRS OF ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS WHICH WOULD SHARE CERTAIN COMMON FACILITIES, ALL SPECIALIZED STAFF, AND MAJOR FACILITIES OFFERED BY A CENTRAL CORE. EACH "SATELLITE" SCHOOL WOULD BE DESIGNED FOR FLEXIBLE USE OF SPACE. WITH CONSOLIDATED ATTENDANCE AT THE CAMPUS SCHOOL, WHICH WOULD REPLACE THE NEIGHBORHOOD SCHOOLS, CLASS SIZE WOULD BE BETTER CONTROLLED AND ANCILLARY SERVICES MADE MORE WIDELY AVAILABLE. MOST IMPORTANT, HOWEVER, WOULD BE THE OPPORTUNITIES FOR IMPROVED INSTRUCTION--TEAM TEACHING, GREATER AVAILABILITY OF THE SERVICES OF AREA SPECIALISTS, INDIVIDUALIZED PUPIL PROGRESS, AND USE OF EDUCATIONAL TECHNOLOGY. EDUCATIONAL EQUALITY WOULD BE ASSURED BECAUSE THE SATELLITES WOULD BE IDENTICAL AND WOULD HAVE A RACIAL BALANCE PROPORTIONATE TO THE CITYWIDE AVERAGE AT EACH GRADE LEVEL. THE CAMPUS PLAN WOULD PERMIT AN INDIVIDUAL CONTINUOUS PROGRESS CURRICULUM AND WOULD OFFER THE SPECIAL EDUCATION PUPIL A CHANCE TO PARTICIPATE IN CAMPUS LIFE. THE CONCEPT IS ECONOMICALLY FEASIBLE BECAUSE 25 PERCENT MORE PUPILS CAN BE SERVED AT A SLIGHTLY HIGHER COST THAN THE COST OF THE NEEDED REPLACEMENTS FOR THE EIGHT SCHOOLS. THIS PAPER WAS PREPARED FOR THE NATIONAL CONFERENCE ON EQUAL EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITY IN AMERICA'S CITIES, SPONSORED BY THE U.S. COMMISSION ON CIVIL RIGHTS, WASHINGTON, D.C., NOVEMBER 16-18, 1967. (NH)

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THE SYRACUSE CAMPUS SCHOOL PLAN

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for the
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in America's Cities
sponsored by the
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U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
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If, as Disraeli said, the fate of a country depends upon the education of the people, then we must quickly do more than pay lip service to the need for quality education and equal educational opportunity. Most American cities are trying to move to meet this need, but the motion is painfully slow; the problems grow at a rate far exceeding that of the piecemeal solutions being found.

Most existing solutions, in any event, tend to deal with the symptoms rather than the disease. The cancer remains, evident in violence, disorder, and hopelessness.

Each year in which these problems remain unsolved sees another group of young Americans lost to productive lives. With each missed opportunity for taking a step ahead, we may be assumed to have

automatically taken a step backward, for there is no standing still.

Education must make a new forward thrust, and inject a new excitement into our schools and communities. We must go further and plan with a flexibility that will create a workable system for tomorrow. We have a responsibility to provide an education framework in which both today's and tomorrow's children will be able to learn and to grow.

The aim of this paper is to outline a concept of elementary education which will meet these needs.

I will draw on both the traditional and the new in education, incorporating some of the lessons learned from past attempts to provide equality of educational opportunity, and at the same time realistically respecting the economic and other limits imposed by the community.

The community in question is Syracuse, New York, with a population of about 210,000. Industrial without being overwhelmingly so, the home of a large university which is growing rapidly, and the commercial hub of central New York, Syracuse is a good example of a progressive urban center in reasonable economic health; it is knee-deep in urban renewal and superhighways, symphony orchestra and community college, park development and high-rise construction.

The city's population appears to be remaining fairly stable at its current level. The big move to the suburbs seems to be tapering off. As in the last few decades, when white families do leave the city, there is a tendency for their numbers to be replaced by non-whites.

One of the seemingly inevitable consequences of a growing Negro population has been the familiar pattern of racially-isolated schools.

While Syracuse cannot be said to suffer from massive segregation problems, the fact remains that among the city's 31 elementary schools,* one -- with an enrollment of 1,200 -- is 92 percent Negro. At the other end of the scale, there are four elementary schools with a Negro enrollment of less than 1 per cent. All told -- in terms of a formula adopted by the Board of Education for measuring racial imbalance -- 24 of the schools are racially imbalanced. (The formula considers racially imbalanced any elementary school whose Negro enrollment is less than .5 or more than 1.5 times the overall elementary school Negro enrollment pattern of the city.)

This de facto segregation -- which has been on the increase in recent years, especially in inner-city schools -- has been the object of a number of efforts by the City School District. Some of these efforts have resulted in modest successes, and others have proved quite unrewarding.

One of the encouraging signs was provided by what happened when Washington Irving School, a largely Negro elementary school in the heart of an urban renewal area, was closed, along with a junior high school in the same area. These children were assigned and transported by bus to 12 other city elementary schools. Reading scores of one group of 24 of these pupils were compared with the

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* This figure does not include one special school for the severely mentally retarded.

scores of a control group of youngsters at Croton, the elementary school with the highest percentage of Negro enrollment. The two groups were matched according to age, sex, and I.Q. In September, both groups were reading at the same level. By June, the transferred Irving pupils had pulled five months ahead of the Croton control group.

Naturally, no one pretends that this result is definitive, nor have we drawn generalizations; we simply have taken heart. Another study noted that reading achievement levels of youngsters in a school to which Negro students were transferred were in no way downgraded, either. This in itself is a negative finding, but does support the view that nothing is lost through such efforts at integration.

Under the "open school" policy adopted by the Board of Education in 1966, a voluntary transfer plan came into being. At the elementary level, this would involve transportation by the School District. To date, however, this plan has not generated much response among either white or Negro parents.

A controlled enrollment policy also is designed to bring about a more equitable racial balance in the schools over a period of years, as students transfer within the city school system or come into it from outside. They may be assigned to schools outside their immediate neighborhoods in order to promote racial balance.

Racial isolation in the schools is not the only pressing problem we face in providing equality of educational opportunity. Equality can be denied to white as to non-white pupils, particularly

in the case of the so-called "disadvantaged learner". Syracuse undertook in 1962 the Madison Area Project, a three-year program in compensatory education (which came to an end in 1965), to deal with the problems of such children, Negro and white. Many of its innovations, including the development of new curricula, are part of today's instructional programs. But the number of children who could be reached by the Project itself was of necessity limited; a continuing program of broader dimensions is clearly called for.

Each of these separate undertakings -- and others, with varying degrees of success -- has had merit. Each has accomplished some good for the city's school system. For the individual children whose lives have been touched, each has doubtless accomplished a great deal. But we have almost 18,000 children in Syracuse's elementary schools; how do we extend maximum opportunity to each of them?

Obvious improvements have been made over the past few years. But the fact remains that improving our schools in what can only be called a spotty fashion has not solved the basic problem. We have not provided equality of opportunities, nor have we improved educational opportunity for all students; the educational needs of today and tomorrow are unmet.

Given an unlimited budget with which to work, and unlimited resources of other kinds, it would not be impossible to develop a program for the existing elementary schools which would meet these needs. Ideally, this would probably take the form of a one-to-one pupil-

teacher ratio; the literal equivalent of Mark Hopkins at one end of the log and the student at the other.

Not only is such a dream-world solution unavailable to Syracuse, but the city also is confronted with another school problem. Eight of the 31 elementary schools are more than a half-century old. Several are badly in need of replacement. That they will be replaced is clear; we now are deciding on the best method of replacement. In the long run this may prove to have been a blessing, for the very urgency of the situation has helped to stimulate the thinking which led to the Campus Plan proposal.

Subtitled "A Feasibility Study for Elementary School Construction in Syracuse, New York", the Plan for Campus Schools offers a total elementary educational concept which integrates curriculum and physical structures in such a way as to derive maximum benefit from each. The plan is unique -- it is applied solely to elementary education within an urban school district -- although in some ways it bears a resemblance to its suburban cousins or to other educational park projects.

The Campus Plan study was commissioned in 1966 by the Syracuse Board of Education and cosponsored by the United States Office of Education, Educational Facilities Laboratories, and the Rosamond Gifford Charitable Corporation of Syracuse. It was conducted by the Syracuse Campus Site Planning Center, whose staff called on a number of professional consultants, including economists, architects, and members of the academic and educational communities.

The study involved a population analysis of the city and an evaluation of the physical plants of Syracuse's existing elementary schools. It considered possible site locations for the replacement of neighborhood schools, either leaving attendance areas pretty much as they are, or building four elementary school campuses for about 4,300 pupils each. Most important, it assessed the curricular and extracurricular potential of these two alternatives.

In order to compare costs, a hypothetical first campus was "built" on paper, as were prototype replacements for the eight neighborhood elementary schools which consultants rated most obsolete. Taken into consideration were the costs of land acquisition, demolition, construction, site development, staffing, operation and transportation. In addition, comparisons were made to assess what a long-range capital finance program for each plan might cost the city.

The study's findings showed that on almost all counts the Campus Schools could offer considerably higher educational quality at only a slightly higher cost than brand new neighborhood schools built in their existing attendance areas. Moreover -- and this is the consideration which dollars and cents cannot easily measure -- it offers this quality to all of the city's children, grades kindergarten through six, effectively erasing the false boundaries of rapidly changing neighborhoods, and solving the problems posed by racial imbalance in the schools.

The Campus Plan involves a complex of as many as eight autonomous elementary schools, each with its own principal, clustered around a central core. Each complex would be located near the city's

periphery, where more desirable land is available at considerably lower cost than in the inner-city. Nearly all of the children attending the campus schools would be transported by bus, with the exception of the relatively few who live close to the campus.

For the purposes of planning, the first campus for Syracuse calls for eight elementary schools with each pair of schools sharing some common facilities and all eight sharing specialized staff and major facilities provided by the central core; these would include a library, physical education center, auditorium, art and music centers, and health services. Each individual "satellite" school would be designed for the flexible use of space; gone forever, one hopes, will be the "box" classroom with its military rows of desks.

A 47-acre site has been tentatively selected for the first development, which would offer ample space for sports, nature study, and an area designed to serve as a neighborhood park.

One obvious advantage of the Campus Plan which comes to mind is the efficient use it can make of staff, both teaching and non-teaching. Not only can the unnecessary duplication of the neighborhood schools be avoided, but many staff members would be able to function far more effectively in the campus environment than in the traditional neighborhood school. Two examples may help to illustrate this point.

Among non-teaching members of the elementary school staff, the school nurse plays an important role. As things now stand in Syracuse, only at the predominantly Negro Croton School - which also

happens to have an especially high enrollment -- is there a full-time nurse. The other 30 elementary schools are served by 11 nurses, all on split schedules and working with decidedly limited facilities. On the campus, on the other hand, the services of three nurses could be available full time, in a permanent and well-appointed health center, and without the extra demands of travel time. Clearly this is a better and more efficient arrangement.

Another example of the advantages of the Campus Plan for staff performance -- and an example closer to the heart of the matter -- is that most important figure of all, the teacher. This touches upon a number of advantages inherent in the Campus Plan idea.

In the neighborhood school - short of annual gerrymandering to create elastic boundaries -- there is no sure way to control class size (and even with arbitrary boundary changes, success would be far from assured). Thus, in the neighborhood elementary schools today, some teachers are called upon to teach 40 or more pupils, while other classes number well below the average of 27 pupils. On the Campus, with consolidated attendance, there would be relatively little difficulty in controlling teaching loads. In this way, each teacher has an equal opportunity to teach, much as each pupil has equal opportunity to learn.

But stability of class size is a minor consideration compared with the teaching methods possible in the Campus elementary school. Here is the ideal setting for team-teaching. Not only does team teaching allow for a close coordination of all elements of the

curriculum; it also enables each teacher to emphasize his strongest abilities. This cannot help but improve the quality of teaching in all subject areas.

This is not to say that team teaching cannot be practiced in other types of schools, but at this moment it is an unfeasible approach in many of our neighborhood elementary schools. The Campus, with its flexible classroom spaces and its equally flexible non-graded, continuous-progress curriculum, would make team teaching almost the only logical approach.

Supporting the teaching team in each Campus Plan school, moreover, would be specialists in such areas as art, music, science, remedial reading, and other phases of special education. Again, this is not to say that such specialists cannot be made available in neighborhood schools. We have them in Syracuse, but like the nurses they are shared to the point of being spread rather thin, and the makeshift facilities they "enjoy" in most of the schools are not really very enjoyable, nor are they conducive to productive teaching.

The Campus Plan makes possible permanent areas for these specialized subjects. Here every child, from whatever home background, may be exposed to horizon-broadening opportunities in what are generally considered to be the civilizing influences of our culture. Each child will be encouraged to pursue his interests and test his abilities at his own individual pace, under expert tutelage.

For the good teacher, these will be rewarding experiences. They will come about primarily because the Campus Plan has built into

it the ability to strengthen the fundamental teacher-pupil relationship. The pupil can progress at an individual pace -- not only because of a continuous-progress curriculum, but because teachers will have more time to work with individual children. Teacher aides, for example, can be productively employed in carrying out many of the detailed jobs strictly outside the realm of teaching itself. Far more significantly, teachers in the Campus Plan school may call on technology to a degree not possible -- at least, not within present economic limitations -- in the neighborhood school.

Some people become quite frightened when we start talking about technology in the schools -- in much the same way that the word "integration" can induce a state of panic in otherwise rational citizens. The anti-technologists express the fear that the computer may "take over", and complain that their children are about to be taught by machines. They go on then, of course, to note that technological aids tend to be expensive, characterizing these aids as "frills".

In the January, 1967, issue of The Saturday Review, the president of the National Association of Educational Broadcasters wrote:

> "The cost of technology...has to be assessed according to what it buys. Technology buys time -- time for swift rather than slow change, and time to humanize education by allowing teachers to work more directly with students on an individual basis. ... Technology buys increased quality -- quality derived from the impact of many minds applied cooperatively to instructional requirements."

In the Campus School we think technology not only will buy all this, but will buy it at a bargain price. Repetitive costs for much advanced equipment would indeed be staggering for eight separate neighborhood schools; for one Campus, although they are high, full value will be received.

While we are not presently planning to install a computer center in the first, ample space provisions have been made for this to happen later. To read the report of the consultants on this aspect of Campus Plan education is to see something like a miracle unfolding in matter-of-fact everyday language.

And even without the miraculous computer -- even with already somewhat old-fashioned "teaching machines" and educational television -- we can see individual progress of the most dramatic kind. A pupil works on his own, sets his own pace. He learns, and he is stimulated to learn more. The machine is an invaluable reinforcement for what the good teacher teaches. It is not and never will be a substitute.

Perhaps this sounds like the advocacy of some kind of educational revolution; but it is not. It is a matter of planned evolution. Education for tomorrow must draw on the art of master teaching as much as on the computer for inspiration and techniques. And in the long run, it is the former rather than the latter which will determine true quality of our schools. Technology can help to speed many educational processes, but the confrontation of teacher and pupil remains at the heart of all learning.

New buildings and carpeted classrooms cannot take the place of a carefully planned curriculum. Good acoustics are no substitute for the competent teaching of reading and writing. The physical surroundings proposed for the campus are meaningless without the program for which they are designed; but the success of the program can be aided by the care with which these surroundings are designed.

Whatever the specifics of the campus buildings turn out to be -- at this point we have only a general idea -- they will be shared by all of the children on the campus. Each youngster will attend "his" individual satellite school, and that school will offer precisely the same kinds of advantages as the other seven. Here, at an admittedly very simple but strongly symbolic level, is equal opportunity.

There are other ways in which the satellite schools will resemble each other. In each a racial balance proportionate to that of the city's schools as a whole at the particular grade level will be maintained. This balance will be about 80 per cent white and 20 per cent non-white.

Such a balance could be achieved only with great difficulty in the neighborhood schools, but it could occur almost naturally in the Campus School to which all children are transported by bus. While it is our intention to assign children to schools by their neighborhoods insofar as possible -- partly for the practical reason that they will then also travel together on the bus -- it will be an easy matter to make arbitrary assignments of some youngsters in the interest of preserving racial balance.

There may well be a secondary advantage to the busing plan. Where all of the children are removed from their home neighborhoods and are thus easily able to identify each other as "rich" or "poor" or by any other obvious labels, many social stigmas and other handicaps may tend to disappear, and youngsters may exhibit a greater willingness to accept each other at face value.

Still another benefit accrues to the child whose family moves within the city, which happens to about 10 per cent of the families of Syracuse elementary school pupils each year. It will be much more possible to keep a child in a campus school, thus eliminating the interruptive influence of a transfer.

This continuity may well have its greatest meaning for the child who most heavily depends upon special teaching assistance, such as remedial reading and speech therapy. In the Campus School, with its continuous-progress curriculum and individualized attention, he will have maximum opportunity for being part of things. Progressing at his own pace, he will have the satisfactions of learning on his own level, yet also will be participating in many school activities with classmates who may be more advanced. He need not feel "left out", as such a child often does in the conventional classroom situation.

Even for the special education pupil, there may be unprecedented opportunity for participation in regular school activities. The first Campus Plan complex calls for services for 110 special education pupils. No longer relegated to total isolation from the other

children, these children would become part of the campus life, at the same time receiving their highly specialized instruction. There is hope that these circumstances might work to minimize emotional disturbances and other problems, and help these pupils to have more successful learning experiences.

There also are many other ways, aside from teaching, in which the Campus Plan idea may substantially assist the disadvantaged child. For example, the work of guidance counselors, psychologists, and visiting teachers could be facilitated to make more effective contact with children who need guidance and, where appropriate, with their families. For the schools must educate outside the boundaries of their buildings and campuses. We must do all we can to reach into the home, and through the more efficient use of staff the Campus Plan hopes to achieve this to a greater extent than is now always possible.

This sketchy description of the new elementary schools we envision may sound too perfect. It must be noted that the plan does not include all of the answers, though we believe it contains enough of them to be eminently workable.

For example, there remains the question of how some parents will travel to the campus to participate in the community meetings so essential to the proper functioning of good schools. In suburbia the answer is the family car, but in some inner-city neighborhoods the family car may not be quite as commonplace, and public transit may not always offer a conveniently direct route. We are seeking ways to solve this potential difficulty.

In fact, transportation seems to pose several of the larger questions. The bus transportation required by the Campus Plan would cost more than the city is now expending on elementary school bus services. Here, however, we do have a few answers. One is that present bus service will have to be considerably expanded anyway, if we are to make the necessary transfers within neighborhood schools to achieve racial balance. Another is that State aid will pay for 90 per cent of the regular school busing costs. And a third is that bus transportation will be safer for the youngsters who now walk to school.

Of the overall costs of the Campus Plan to the city, much already has been said and much more doubtless will be forthcoming. In terms of construction, the cost of the first campus is estimated at about $10.5 million, while that of replacing the eight neighborhood schools with roughly comparable facilities in their attendance areas comes to about $11 million. This figure fails to take into account the fact that the campus would accommodate approximately 1,000 pupils (from other overcrowded schools not due for immediate replacement), over the capacity of the neighborhood replacements. The cost of staffing the campus would be higher -- but only 3 per cent higher than that of staffing the neighborhood replacements, while serving 25 per cent more pupils.

The Syracuse Campus Plan appears to be economically feasible. This is true partly because necessary economic limitations have been kept constantly in mind. We have not incorporated into the plan every

single element we would like. It would, for example, be splendid to be able to reduce the pupil-teacher ratio; compared with some nearby communities, our 27:1 ratio is high. But, since we could not realistically hope to do this at present, we tried for the next best thing -- to create conditions which would enable that one teacher to give his very best to those 27 pupils.

In devising the elementary school Campus Plan, we have tried to make flexibility our rule. This means flexibility in the physical structure of the buildings, with movable walls and seating arrangements; flexibility in class size, depending one subject matter and other variables; flexibility in overall planning, to allow for the technological advances we know are coming.

Above all, flexibility applies to the teaching program. It considers each child as a unique person, who will be called upon to face an unbelievably complex world. In seeking to meet urgent needs, the Campus Plan takes full advantage of the opportunities which are so rapidly changing the face of education.

It is certainly not our aim to make of every child a poet or botanist or nuclear physicist -- though it is our hope that those with these potentials will be enabled to recognize and fulfill them more readily as a result of their experience in the Campus Plan school. The aim is to present facilities, environments, and techniques which will help each youngster to acquire the skills and understanding he will need for the demanding decades ahead, whatever his place.

Is the Campus Plan the only answer? Doubtless not. For those who have studied the Syracuse situation, it appears to be the best answer here, and reaction so far to the published study indicates that other communities may also find it an adoptable or, at any rate, adaptable concept.

The historian Dexter Perkins, writing of American education, said that solving the problems

> "will call for high imagination, audacity in the application of new ideas, willingness to pay the price in the form of increased taxation and of increased private benevolence to our institutions of learning. But there are increasing signs of awareness of the problems, and, as the situation becomes more and more apparent, there is reason to believe that it will be met more forthrightly and more vigorously."

The Syracuse Campus Plan represents one of these forthright and vigorous attempts to meet the problem. It is our real hope that it will succeed not only in achieving at least a partial solution to some of the social ills besetting one city, but that it may help to inspire other communities as well.